NGA INDUSTRY INTERACTION PROCESS

1. **Introduction:** To ensure appropriate access for new companies and new technologies to be introduced to NGA management, the Acquisition Contracts Office (AC) and the NGA Business Executive (BX) previously partnered to set up the industry visit process. Building on that process, AC and the BX are proposing a new Industry Interaction Process that will ensure that all new companies and/or technologies are introduced in a timely, efficient, and repeatable manner.

2. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Industry Interaction Process (IIP) is to tie together under one functional office all industry-wide activities not otherwise solicited through the normal procurement process (i.e., unsolicited proposals, white papers and industry visits). With the establishment of the IIP, NGA will institute a single forum for managing industry interactions to ensure consistency across NGA and better focus NGA resources on mission needs.

3. **Background:**

   a. There are multiple processes (formal and informal) within NGA for industry to access NGA to present new technologies, new industry capabilities, unsolicited proposals and white papers. Unfortunately, in many instances companies are accessing all venues in an undisciplined manner thereby reducing efficiencies for both NGA and themselves and often times not reaching the appropriate personnel necessary to adjudicate their entry into NGA.

   b. In an effort to achieve better results for NGA and provide legitimate access to NGA management, the Director of NGA instituted a more formal process, through the BX and AC, to ensure industry visits were better coordinated and provide better access to NGA. Additionally, in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the BX wanted to find a more focused means for handling industry visits and gain access to the more promising technologies and industry capabilities that could provide immediate benefits to the war efforts. To accomplish this redirection, the BX requested that industry provide NGA with a white paper describing how its capabilities and technology could help meet NGA's needs to support the war fighter as part of the request process for an industry visit. The BX also established an Executive Committee with representatives from each of the directorates, CITO, AC and

other specialty offices as needed to review the white papers and judge their merits for supporting immediate needs in support of OIF. During OIF, only the companies with the more promising capabilities were invited in for a corporate visit--hosted by an executive committee.

c. The remainder of industry visits and white papers were either passed on to Directorate/functional offices for further consideration or sent a letter thanking them for their interest in NGA but declining a request for visit at that time. This process worked extremely well for NGA during OIF—bringing many new capabilities to light that otherwise may have been only notionally considered through the normal process. Tying the industry visit process together with a request for a white paper helped assure industry that NGA was trying to treat everyone fairly and accomplish a critical mission. Generally, industry felt it received a fair and honest evaluation, fully understanding that NGA was intimately involved in supporting the war effort.

d. With the major part of the war effort behind us, NGA abandoned the corporate review process in favor of the less taxing system whereby the BX adjudicates industry visit requests as done before OIF. While an improvement, this effort is, at best, mildly disciplined but still offers many opportunities for promising companies and technologies to go largely unnoticed. Additionally, industry is also submitting white papers and unsolicited proposals through various organizations within NGA— often to the wrong offices. Without a formal process, the unsolicited proposals often go without further exposure to other potentially interested NGA mission offices—a negative impact to the company as well as potentially the NGA mission. The primary concern that this paper addresses is the lack of a process offering a single point of entry into NGA for new companies, new capabilities and new technologies.

4. **Recommendation:**

a. NGA should establish a more formal/disciplined process for interacting with industry outside the normal contracting processes (industry visits, white papers, unsolicited proposals).

b. The Industry Interaction Process (IIP) will tie together, under one functional office all industry-wide activities not otherwise solicited through the normal procurement process. With the establishment of the IIP, NGA will institute a single

forum for managing industry interactions to ensure consistency across NGA, and to provide the best exposure for industry within the appropriate NGA mission offices.

c. The IIP will act much like the executive forum used during OIF to ensure all industry interactions are being considered first for specific operational and corporate needs and to stay in touch with where industry is headed with technology for future NGA interest.

d. The IIP process is outlined in Tab A. Tab B contains a flow diagram providing a schematic of the process and the interactions within NGA and industry. Tab C provides additional background concerning the current processes and associated shortcomings.

Tab A - Process

1. The premise behind the IIP is to create a single process/ point of entry for all industry interactions (industry visits, white papers, unsolicited proposals) outside the normal contracting processes. The IIP will consist of an integrated process and an Industry Interaction Process Panel (IIP).

2. IIP Composition:

   a. Chair—Deputy BX
   b. NGA Technical Director
   c. BX or TX representatives from S, P, A, I, T, and GT
   d. DD/AC or Designated Representative
   e. NGA Small and Disadvantage Business Utilization Officer
   f. Community Acquisition Risk Center Representative
   g. OGC Ethics Review Representative
   h. IIP Secretariat
   i. Other technical personnel as requested

3. IIP Process:

   a. The IIP Secretariat will:
      i.   Be the Agency's central point of contact with industry;
      ii. Field all telephone and E-mail inquiries;
      iii. Review, coordinate, and track all visit requests, receive all white papers and unsolicited proposals;
      iv. Schedule monthly IIP meetings;
      v.   Prepare agenda for bi-weekly IIP meetings;
      vi. Distribute read-ahead packages to all IIP members in preparation for the bi-weekly IIP meetings;
      vii. Record minutes of IIP meetings;
      viii. Distribute white papers or unsolicited proposals to appropriate directorate BX;
      ix. Track directorate BX reviews of white papers and unsolicited proposals;
      x.   Coordinate with appropriate Acquisition Contracts office and forward directorate

BX decision memo and proposal for follow up action;

xi. Prepare letters for DD/BX signature if industry visits, white papers or unsolicited proposals are immediately rejected;

xii. Prepare letters for DD/BX signature if industry visits, white papers or unsolicited proposals are rejected after further review by a directorate/office;

xiii. Ensure the NGA Industry Database is current; and

xiv. Prepare monthly reports for the NGA BX.

b. The IIP will:

i. Review the read-ahead packages (industry visit request, white papers, unsolicited proposals) in preparation of the bi-weekly meetings.

ii. Convene on a bi-weekly basis to discuss:
(1) Request for industry visits and decide:
(a) If industry visits should be hosted by the BX, or passed to a directorate BX to host or declined.
(b) Accept or reject white papers or unsolicited proposals:
(i) If accepted, white papers or unsolicited proposals are determined to be of interest to NGA and directed to the most appropriate BX for review and consideration.
(ii) If rejected, white papers or unsolicited proposals are determined not to be of interest to NGA, they are returned to the IIP Secretariat for action.

iii. AC will delegate the handling of unsolicited proposals and white papers to the IIP for receipt, coordination and final notifications to industry, signed by the DD/BX.

4. Receipt of Documents/Requests for Visits.

    a. Establish a link on NGA's Homepage in order for industry to share and communicate their technology with NGA Management in a timely, efficient, and repeatable manner. This includes industry visit requests, unsolicited proposals and white papers.

    b. The new NGA Homepage link will be titled, "Industry Correspondence". When this link is clicked, the following information will be provided:

    "This website provides industry with a formal method for requesting appropriate access for companies to introduce their technology to NGA Management. If you are interested providing NGA with a corporate overview briefing, unsolicited proposal or white paper, please submit your request to the following address: industry@NGA.mil. Please be sure to include the following information:

        Company name and address.
        Point of contact.
        Telephone number and E-mail address.
        Type of Request: Corporate overview briefing, unsolicited proposal or white paper.

Thank you for interest in NGA. You will be contacted shortly regarding your request."

    c. For requests coming in through means other than "NGA Homepage", the IIP Secretariat will be provided requisite information for proper coordination and review by the IIP.

5. Staffing: The IIP process will require two full-time employees, with limited clerical support. AC will continue to staff one position (IIP Secretary). The BX will provide mid-level contractor support. This person will also serve as the backup to the IIP Secretary.

6. IIP Database: BX will maintain responsibility for the IIP database under the coordination of the IIP Secretariat to include keeping the database current along with O&M responsibility.

Tab C - Background

Additional Background:

1. **White Papers and Unsolicited Proposals**. On a periodic basis NGA receives white papers and unsolicited proposals from private industry. There is no formal process in place for the handling of white papers. However, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 15.6 and the NGA Acquisition Regulation Implementation (NARI) prescribe the proper handling of unsolicited proposals.

     a. In accordance with FAR Subpart 15.6, Unsolicited proposals allow unique and innovative ideas or approaches that have been developed outside the Government to be made available to Government agencies for use in accomplishment of their missions. Unsolicited proposals are offered with the intent that the Government will enter into a contract with the offeror for research and development or other efforts supporting the Government mission, and often represent a substantial investment of time and effort by the offeror. A valid unsolicited proposal must-
         i. Be innovative and unique;
         ii. Be independently originated and developed by the offeror;
         iii. Be prepared without Government supervision, endorsement, direction, or direct Government involvement;
         iv. Include sufficient detail to permit a determination that Government support could be worthwhile and the proposed work could benefit the agency's research and development or other mission responsibilities; and
         v. Not be an advance proposal for a known agency requirement that can be acquired by competitive methods.

     b. FAR Subpart 15.606 states that agencies shall establish procedures for controlling the receipt, evaluation, and timely disposition of unsolicited proposals. Implementation language is contained in NARI Subpart 5X15.606 whereby the DD/AC is the Agency point of contact for the coordination, receipt and handling of

unsolicited proposals and to provide advice and assistance to NGA personnel.

2. **Industry Visits**.

    a. All industry visits are coordinated through the Industry Visit Coordinator (IVC) in the Business Executive's Office. There are two categories of industry visits, as follows:

        i. Corporate Briefings. Corporate briefings are scheduled to maintain a dialog with EXCOM members on existing NGA contracts.

        ii. Capability Briefings. Capability briefings provide the introduction of new technology.

3. **Issues**:

    a. White Papers. As previously stated, there is no formal process in place for the handling of white papers. White papers are submitted to a variety of NGA offices/directorates and often go unnoticed by the customers who could best use the information/technology being discussed.

    b. Unsolicited Proposals. The proper receipt and handling of unsolicited proposals has not followed the prescribed procedures outlined in the FAR and NARI. Numerous unsolicited proposals have been received that were not coordinated with the DD/AC and only saw the light of day as the person receiving the proposal found a need for the technology/proposed solution. Other potential customers in NGA are often unaware of a proposed solution.

    c. Industry Visits. There have been industry visits hosted by EXCOM members that should have been presented at the Directorate level. A need exists to determine the best audience for industry visits to ensure proper exposure for both the company and to ensure that all new technology or proposed solutions are provided to appropriate NGA personnel.

    d. Small Business. While the AC Small Business advocate has provided insight into new companies interested in providing goods and services to NGA, there has not be a forum for advocacy of small businesses early in the

process. Introducing small business advocacy at the time a company contacts NGA will ensure appropriate insight by all directorates/offices.

    e. Database: NGA has not had one database to check to see if a company has requested an industry visit or submitted an unsolicited proposal. The BX and AC have partnered to develop one database to capture data on industry visits. Consolidating information on white papers, unsolicited proposals, industry visits as well as small businesses proposing to support NGA will ensure that the Director and Deputy Director of NGA have insight into all new companies/technologies as desired.

    f. Industry: New companies desiring to do business with NGA and/or to introduce a new technology have often taken a stab in the dark about who to call – often someone they know at NGA – who may or may not be able to provide guidance. The proposed IIP will provide industry with one point of entry and ensure that their inquiries/proposals are addressed in a timely manner and by the right NGA directorates or offices.